

# Employment Services in Supportive Housing

**curriculum**  
supportive housing training series



CORPORATION *for* SUPPORTIVE HOUSING



**CUCS**  
Center for Urban Community Services, Inc.

# HUD CURRICULUM

## EMPLOYMENT SERVICES IN SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

**PURPOSE AND GOALS:** The purpose of this six-hour training is to explore the topic of employment and employment-training programs for tenants living in supportive housing. Our goal is that by the end of this training you will see career-development services as an integral part of the services offered to tenants. Trainees will explore major considerations in setting up a vocational program, understand a variety of approaches for services and be able to create a culture that promotes work.

### AGENDA

#### I. INTRODUCTIONS (20–30 minutes)

#### II. DEVELOPING A RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

- A. Employment Services in Supportive Housing (20–30 minutes)
- B. Career Counseling (20–30 minutes)
- C. Supportive Employment (20–30 minutes)
- D. Competitive Employment (20–30 minutes)
- E. On-Going Job Support (10–20 minutes)

#### III. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICE DELIVERY

- A. Defining Goals and Expectations (10–20 minutes)
- B. Creating a Culture that Promotes Work (20–30 minutes)
- C. Defining Staff Roles (20–30 minutes)
- D. Managing Entitlements (20–30 minutes)
- E. ADA (20–30 minutes)
- F. Confidentiality and Sharing Information (10–20 minutes)

#### IV. SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES/SPECIAL NEEDS

- A. Policy Issues (10–20 minutes)
- B. Program Issues (10–20 minutes)
- C. Specific Service Needs (10–20 minutes)
  - 1. Mental Illness (10–20 minutes)
  - 2. HIV/AIDS (10–20 minutes)
  - 3. Alcohol and Substance Use (10–20 minutes)
  - 4. Homelessness (10–20 minutes)
- D. Case Studies (20–30 minutes)

#### V. CONCLUSION (10 minutes)

## HANDOUTS

1. Agenda
2. Employment Support Services
3. Vocational Services Planning Worksheet
4. Career Counseling
5. Self Assessment
6. Benefits of Supportive Employment
7. Competitive Employment
8. Job Interview Tips
9. How to Be a Successful Employee
10. On-Going Job Support
11. Program Goals and Expectations
12. Creating a Culture That Promotes Work
13. Staff Roles and Titles
14. Entitlements
15. Americans with Disability Act
16. Confidentiality and Sharing Information
17. Employment Issues for People With Disabilities
18. Special Needs Cases
19. Bibliography

## **Trainer's Preface for Employment**

### **I. Brief Summary of Curriculum Content**

This curriculum contains at least six hours of verbal content. This does not mean the content must be covered in its entirety. Depending on the intended focus of the training and the format (exercises and small group discussions vs. large group presentation), portions of this training can be elaborated, abridged and/or deleted.

### **II. Trainer Qualification**

Key to the successful delivery of the curriculum and to participants learning is the qualifications of the trainer. What the trainer brings to the training session—including their knowledge about the subject being taught, their experience in supportive housing and their training or teaching skills—will impact the quality of the training and the outcomes. This curriculum is intended for use by individuals with the appropriate constellation of talent and ability to manage the learning of others in addressing the issues that emerge when providing support to tenants considering or in search of employment. The person should have an understanding of the issues faced by clinical staff as well as building support staff.

### **III. Good Training Practice**

#### **A. How People Learn**

People learn through a combination of lecture, visual aids and participation. The more actively they are involved in the process, the more information they will retain. For this reason, eliciting answers from the group rather than presenting material is usually preferable. Additionally, it is important to include exercises that stimulate interaction and experiential learning and not spend all of the time lecturing. Be aware, however, that group participation and discussion takes more time than straightforward presentations and may cut down on the amount of content possible to cover. What is minimized or deleted from the curriculum should be based on the assessment of the group's learning needs and the goals initially contracted with the group.

#### **B. Know Your Audience**

The type of setting that the trainees work in and their roles will determine the areas of the curriculum that the trainer will focus on. Gathering as much information about the group beforehand is recommended.

### C. Introductions and Training Contract

Introductions should provide the trainer with more information as to who the audience is. The trainer will want to know the person's name, their program and their role, and what they hope to get out of the training. The trainer should then clarify what will and will not be covered. This is the training contract.

### D. Acknowledge and Use Expertise of the Participants

This is important as it allows people to learn from each other, builds group cohesion, keeps people involved and establishes an atmosphere of mutual respect. It is possible that some participants will already be working in employment programs and their experience will be very valuable to other participants.

### E. Flexibility

Throughout the training, the trainer should continually assess the needs of the group and revise the amount of time devoted to each specific topic. Responding to the needs and interests of the group must be balanced with the agreement to cover certain topics. It is the trainer's job to respond to the needs that arise and yet stay focused on the subject matter. For example, if participants are interested in spending a great deal of time on people with special needs, this section would be expanded and other parts shortened. If the group is working exclusively with PWA's, for example, more time would be spent on that topic area.

## IV. Training Content

### A. Sequence of Content

Depending on the area of practice of the majority of trainees (case managers, clinical supervisors and property management) the trainer may tailor the training content to address the primary area of interest of the group early on in the day.

### B. Flexibility of Content

Additionally, the trainer should expect to examine more deeply, clinical issues with an audience that is primarily service-based, just as they can anticipate spending more time on establishing policies and procedures with a group comprised of building management. With a mixed group, the trainer should strive to attain a balance. Both areas, however, should be covered regardless of whether or not the group is property management or clinical staff. Employment is an area where both sets of staff need to work together. Again, if the audience is not serving people with disabilities, that content area can be eliminated. All other content should be covered.

### C. Personalizing Content

In order to personalize the training, it is important for the trainer to offer case examples or anecdotes regarding the topic. This can also be achieved by eliciting personal stories from trainees. Using these relevant stories will make the training more interesting and personal.

### D. Matching Content to a Target Audience

This training is geared to all levels of staff doing both service-oriented work as well as property management. It is important for the trainer to ensure that the trainees match the target audience for this training.

## V. Time Management of Content

Each section of the agenda has time frames allotted. The trainer should be aware that if a great deal of time is devoted to one topic area, other content areas might be sacrificed. Group exercises can always be abridged, if necessary, for time's sake. For example, if the group exercise involves dividing into four groups to work on four separate cases, the trainer should consider having each group work on a smaller number of cases. This will shorten the report back time, but will not eliminate the group process. Remember, elicitation and discussion takes more time than lecturing but less time than small group exercises. The trainer needs to balance this with the fact that lecturing is also the least effective way to learn.

The trainer will find that each time this curriculum is trained, it will vary. Being mindful of good training practice and making adjustments to the timing and sequence will allow for a tailored training that will be most beneficial to participants.

## I: INTRODUCTION

**TRAINER NOTE:** This section includes an introduction of the trainer, a review of the training incidentals (hours, breaks, coffee, bathroom locations) and a review of the training goals and objectives. This is followed by a roundtable introduction of trainees.

### BRIEF LECTURE:

The purpose of this six-hour training is to explore the topic of employment and employment-training programs for tenants living in supportive housing. Our goal is that by the end of this training you will see career-development services as an integral part of the services you offer tenants. This training aims to assist you in determining the steps your organization may want to consider in order to implement a vocational component to your housing program.

At the end of the training, participants will:

- Understand the major considerations in setting up a vocational program in their supportive housing projects
- Understand a variety of approaches for implementing employment services
- Understand the various aspects of career counseling
- Be able to create a culture that promotes work
- Understand a variety of staff roles needed to deliver employment services

**TRAINER NOTE:** Trainer will introduce him/herself to trainees, including experience in supportive housing, employment or service delivery. Each trainee is asked to introduce himself or herself by stating name, agency, staff role and what s/he hopes to get out of the training. Trainer should write concerns of trainees on flipchart. Trainer will review agenda and link trainee concerns to agenda items for the day. See **HANDOUT #1: AGENDA**.

**LEARNING POINTS:** Trainer is establishing the learning contract for the day. It is important to discuss what will and will not be covered during this introduction so trainees know what to expect. This is the learning contract. If someone mentions something in the go round that is not on the agenda but related, see if it can be tied in at an appropriate point in the training. Similarly, if the group is interested in exploring certain topic areas more in-depth, the trainer may decide to shift some topic content.

## **II.: DEVELOPING A RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

### **II.A: EMPLOYMENT SERVICES IN SUPPORTIVE HOUSING** (20–30 minutes)

**TRAINER ELICITS:** WHY IS WORK IMPORTANT? WHAT ARE SOME OF THE FACTORS THAT HAVE PROMPTED SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAMS TO FOCUS ON VOCATIONAL NEEDS? [Expected responses include:]

- Work has obvious value in promoting residential stability and improving the quality of tenants' lives.
- Employment and employment-related activities can be an excellent way to help motivate tenants, improve self-esteem and possibly lead to self-sufficiency.
- The substantial changes in eligibility requirements for public benefits that were instituted in the late 1990s have resulted in the loss of benefits for many tenants and have prompted supportive housing programs to focus more on the employment and vocational needs of tenants.

#### **BRIEF LECTURE:**

Since having a job is a necessity for most people, all supportive services programs are likely to offer tenants some kind of assistance in the area of employment. At a minimum, these services may include help with resume writing, developing linkages to GED programs, and providing access to a computer, telephone and fax line.

Barring the pressures placed on tenants that are related to entitlement issues, the supportive housing setting allows staff to work with tenants over time, to set short- and long-term goals, and to address obstacles to reaching the goals.

The size and scope of employment programs vary depending upon the number of people to be served, program goals and the amount of funding available. This training focuses on the major areas to be considered in developing an employment program for supportive housing tenants. Ultimately, the orientation of an employment program will be influenced by a variety of factors, including program philosophies and external pressures. What a program can actually accomplish will also depend upon the amount and type of resources that are available to it.

**TRAINER NOTE:** Trainer will elicit ideas from trainees to generate a discussion on employment services and write them on a flipchart. See **HANDOUT #2: EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT SERVICES.**

**TRAINER ELICITS:** WHAT ARE OUR GOALS IN PROVIDING VOCATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES? [Expected responses include:]

- To help individual tenants achieve success toward his/her employment goals and career objectives
- To provide motivational support and the extra help that an individual may need to get and keep a job
- To help people gain insight into their potentials and limitations
- To help re-integrate people into the community

**TRAINER ELICITS:** WHAT ARE THE GENERAL TYPES OF SUPPORTS USUALLY PROVIDED PRIOR TO AND AFTER OBTAINING EMPLOYMENT? [Expected responses include:]

- Helping to generate and sustain the motivation to become employed
- Assisting in developing a resume and/or completing job applications
- Helping prepare for a job interview
- Discussing how to respond to personal questions
- Discussing how to respond to issues of self-disclosure regarding a disability
- Offering pre- and post-employment support groups
- Developing a career plan
- Arranging for English-as-a Second-Language (ESL) classes
- Discussing work-appropriate grooming and attire
- Helping to arrange for child care
- Recognizing successes
- Supporting people through setbacks
- Budgeting a paycheck
- Assisting with stress-management skills
- Assisting with conflict-resolution skills
- Helping network and expand job resources
- Offering access to education and job training

Programs can offer these supports individually, in groups and through referrals.

**TRAINER NOTE:** See ***HANDOUT #3: VOCATIONAL PLANNING WORKSHEET***. Review with participants.

**LEARNING POINT:** Trainees will have a wider understanding of the importance of employment to individuals. Trainees will have a basic sense of how an employment program can support tenants, as well as the services needed to do so.

**II.B: CAREER COUNSELING** (20–30 minutes)

**TRAINER NOTE:** Trainer will provide information on career counseling through a combination of lecturing, facilitating a discussion, having participants analyze an individual case example and reviewing some of the handouts with trainees. See ***HANDOUT #4: CAREER COUNSELING***.

**TRAINER STATES:** Career counseling includes an assessment of interests, motivations, capabilities, education, job training and work history. Of course, an individual's career plan can, and often does, change as a function of experience and motivation, but discussing the future and a possible career path is likely to provide helpful insights.

**TRAINER ELICITS:** WHAT ARE SOME SPECIFIC AREAS TO ASSESS WHEN DOING CAREER COUNSELING? [Expected responses include:]

- Education and Work History
- Level of Motivation
- Strengths and Skills
- Short-Term Employment Preferences
- Long-Term Career Goals
- Potential Obstacles, Limitations and Disincentives (such as physical constraints, entitlement and benefit disincentives)
- History of How Special Needs Have Affected Employment
- Target Dates for Achieving Goals

**TRAINER STATES:** Self-assessment is an important part of this process.

**TRAINER NOTE:** See ***HANDOUT #5: SELF-ASSESSMENT AND VOCATIONAL HISTORY AND PREFERENCES***. Review with trainees.

**TRAINER ELICITS:** A CAREER-COUNSELING PROCESS SHOULD EVENTUATE IN A CAREER PLAN. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE INGREDIENTS THAT NEED TO BE IN THIS PLAN? [Expected responses include:]

- The plan delineates specific employment goals and the tasks required to achieve these goals.
- The plan should provide participants a clear starting point on the path to advancement.

- Additionally, plans identify needed education and skills training as well as areas of support that might be needed to access and maintain employment. Ideally, career plans should be reviewed and updated periodically.

**TRAINER STATES:** A common issue that arises in career planning is that tenants may have what we consider to be ambitious goals. Seemingly ambitious aspirations among tenants are not unusual nor are these views necessarily a problem, and staff should be careful about imposing more constrained or “realistic” perspectives. Often in working toward what seems like an unrealistic goal, tenants will actually make progress towards employment. More common, perhaps, are issues of low self-esteem and lack of confidence.

**TRAINER NOTE:** LARGE GROUP EXERCISE: Trainer will read the following case to the entire group. “I WANT TO BE A LAWYER”: Madeline is a 58-year-old tenant who had her last stable job as a secretary about 18 years ago. She entered the employment program office asking for assistance to become a lawyer. The vocational counselor explored other avenues of work, but Madeline was persistent in her stated goal: to be a lawyer.

**TRAINER ELICITS:** WHAT DO YOU THINK MIGHT BE SOME WAYS FOR THE VOCATIONAL COUNSELOR TO PROCEED? [Expected responses include:]

- The vocational counselor should work with her to design a plan for reaching her goal.
- Explore what being a lawyer means to Madeline (e.g., respect, success...)
- Tasks to achieve goals might include:
  - Getting a GED
  - Improving her appearance and wardrobe
  - Volunteering work in a law office
  - Pre-vocational program
  - Develop computer skills
  - Practice interviewing
  - Updating resume

**TRAINER STATES:** These experiences might impact Madeline. Undoubtedly, her self-esteem would increase. She may be more ready to accept another type of position at that point. However, no progress would be made if she had not felt that her wishes were what set the agenda.

**LEARNING POINT:** The above case example illustrates how a vocational counselor can be effective and help an individual identify a clear starting point to advance toward personal goals. When ambitious, long-range goals are presented, it is often helpful to identify the steps or short-term objectives to be accomplished. Additionally, it is useful for the counselor to understand the range of motivations behind an individual's career goals. In this case, perhaps Madeline's goal to become a lawyer was related to her preference to work in an office environment where co-workers dress in business attire. Vocational Counseling must focus on what the tenant wants. Steps toward employment must always relate to the tenant's goals.

**II.C: SUPPORTIVE EMPLOYMENT ON SITE** (20–30 minutes)

**TRAINER NOTE:** Trainer will review the salient points related to supportive employment through lecture, discussion and a small group exercise. See **HANDOUT #6: BENEFITS OF SUPPORTIVE EMPLOYMENT.**

**LECTURE:** Some housing sites have Supported Employment Programs, where on-the-job support and training is provided.

**TRAINER ELICITS:** WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PROVIDING IN-HOUSE EMPLOYMENT? [Expected responses include:]

- Tenants can practice interview and all other skills needed to obtain a job.
- Offers the opportunity to test employment skills in a safe environment.
- Provides an opportunity to discover strengths and limitations.
- Builds self-confidence and interpersonal skills.
- Staff can monitor aptitude and performance.
- Many organizations have found tenants to be a valuable labor pool.
- Other tenants benefit by getting a sense of their own potential in seeing neighbors working.
- Allows for a “jobs first” approach that is appealing to tenants.
- Succeeding in a transitional position can make the difference with prospective employers who may be reluctant to hire individuals who have spotty employment backgrounds.
- Job development staff can attest to the employee’s ability to perform.
- Can provide a process of advancement.

**TRAINER NOTE: EXERCISE:** Break trainees into small groups and ask them to brainstorm on types of supportive employment opportunities that can be run on-site or outside the sites for the supportive housing tenants. [Expected responses include: peer counseling, messenger, food services, on-site food services, desk management, security, “vanpool” for local tenants, gardening, maintenance, administrative support.]

**LECTURE:** The amount of time participants will need in transitional positions varies. Though neat on the surface, strictly pre-determined time limits for in-house positions can prove to be strenuous all around. A suitable job outside the sponsoring organization may not be available, nor may the individual be ready

when the artificial time clock rings. A planning process to address next steps after the training period should accompany transitional employment positions. Flexibility in the length of these positions is usually preferred, even though this more open-ended practice can sometimes pose other challenges, such as a transitional job transforming into a permanent position.

**TRAINER ELICITS:** WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS OF TENANTS WORKING WHERE THEY LIVE? [Expected responses include:]

- PROS — Individuals sometimes care more about their work if it regards where they live. Additionally, these are often valuable transitional positions offering staff the ability to directly observe workplace behavior and affording tenants a familiar and supportive work environment.
- CONS — A tenant might be in the uncomfortable position of reporting a neighbor for some type of infraction, or requiring a neighbor's guest to sign a registry, or finding oneself scrutinized during off-hours. For some, having a dual role in a building can be confusing and sometimes foster resentment.

**BRIEF LECTURE:** The challenges posed by the arrangement must be addressed through proper training and supervision of both employees and job supervisors.

In-house positions for tenants are also frequently generated within businesses that the organization sponsors or within tenant-operated micro-businesses. Sponsors have opened bookstores, daycare centers, ice cream shops, bakeries and thrift stores, and typically train and hire tenants to work in and manage these operations. Creating a business for the sole purpose of training and hiring tenants can be a complex and costly venture. Organization's involved in running businesses must continually balance the success of the business against all else. Still, independently sponsored businesses can greatly expand the number of training slots and jobs, and provide unparalleled degrees of freedom to offer a range of individuals opportunities to be part of the business community.

**LEARNING POINTS:** Trainees will be able to consider different types of supportive employment opportunities both within and outside of the residence.

**II.D: COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT** (20–30 minutes)

**TRAINER NOTE:** Through a combination of lecture and discussion, trainer will address this issue. See ***HANDOUT #7: COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT.***

**TRAINER STATES:** Locating employment opportunities is the domain of both tenants and staff. Sometimes people are very concerned about the type of job they get, and other times they do not have specific career objectives.

**TRAINER ELICITS:** WHAT ARE SOME WAYS THAT PEOPLE CAN FIND OR BE HELPED TO FIND COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT? [Expected responses include:]

- Searching the want ads and “cold calling”
- Referral to employment programs
- Staff can clip want ads and maintain job boards of current listings.
- Staff can help individual tenants to follow-up on specific job leads and searches.
- Programs can offer transportation funds, a clothing allowance or other short-term funds related to finding a job.
- Staff can engage in job development efforts with employers, cultivating links with local businesses and retail chains, and serving as a broker when timing and mutual interests align.
- Maintaining activity on both sides of the equation (jobs and job applicants) is usually a major challenge for vocational programs, and mechanisms for sustaining interest among all parties can be important to a program’s on-going viability.
- Help people prepare for interviews

**TRAINER NOTE:** See ***HANDOUT #8: JOB INTERVIEW TIPS.***

**BRIEF LECTURE:** Some organizations have developed industry-specific training programs which focus on developing a labor pool that is familiar with a specific industry and corporate cultures.

By tapping into employment and economic trends (such as the growth of the hospitality industry in various urban centers), enterprising organizations have worked to create growth partnerships with local and national businesses, matching training to very specific employment needs.

These arrangements often allow programs to plan for specific types of job openings and to help orient trainees to a specific job market.

The drawback to this is that it can potentially limit the types of jobs available to participants.

**LEARNING POINTS:** Long-term classroom training, assessments and other prerequisites to getting a job can discourage people. Some individuals often learn more about themselves and what additional training and skills they need and want by entering the work world. Additionally, getting paid and having the satisfaction of holding a job are often invaluable motivators for self-determination and advancement.

**II.E: ON-GOING JOB SUPPORT** (10–20 minutes)

**BRIEF LECTURE:** Once people are placed in jobs, they may need assistance in managing and retaining the positions. In many cases, on-going job support will be an extension of the vocational supports and services that were provided early in the vocational counseling process. Sometimes, an issue that required individualized attention will continue to pose a problem after the person is employed (grooming and attire, childcare arrangements).

As the individual becomes more engaged in work and more pressed for time, however, s/he may not be as amenable or available to meet with staff. For some people, offering assistance over the telephone can be an efficient and effective way to provide needed support.

Ideally, tenants should be able to come back for assistance and career planning for as long as necessary. In on-going work with all tenants, however, it is always useful to reinforce successes.

In some supportive housing programs, efforts to help tenants manage their jobs and advance their careers are shaped in on-going workshops or trainings focused on workplace issues and new skills.

**TRAINER NOTE:** See **HANDOUT#9: HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYEE.** Trainer reviews this Handout stating that these areas can be addressed in individual work or in groups. See **HANDOUT #10: ON-GOING JOB SUPPORT.**

**TRAINER ELICITS:** WHAT MIGHT BE SOME TOPICS ADDRESSED IN THIS TYPE OF WORKSHOP? [Expected responses include:]

- Managing the Supervisor and Co-Worker Relationships
- Re-Evaluating Career Goals
- Issues of Entering or Re-Entering the Workforce
- Managing a Disability in the Work Place
- Time Management
- Conflict Resolution
- Developing Support Systems
- Communication Skills
- Stress Management

**TRAINER STATES:** When applicable, some programs use on-site Job Coaches or staff that become familiar with individual work locations and are available, if needed, to come on the job site to observe and coach participants.

**TRAINER ELICITS:** WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS OF THIS TYPE OF SITUATION? [Expected responses include:]

PROS:

- If the tenant is unable to show up on a particular day the employer has someone else to cover.
- Some people feel safer with this additional support, and they can learn at a less demanding pace.

CONS:

- Some people are embarrassed by the presence of a Job Coach at the work place.
- The service can engender stigmas. As a result, programs are usually very careful to use this intervention only when absolutely necessary.

**TRAINER STATES:** In spite of thorough assessments and lots of supports, people will have setbacks, experience problems in the workplace and will sometimes lose jobs. Staff should prepare people for these possibilities and use these experiences as learning opportunities. It is normal to have some problems at work and to sometimes lose a job. Staff can help by trying to sort out what went wrong and how to better manage next time.

**LEARNING POINTS:** This section stresses how important it is for people to continue to receive support even after they are placed in an employment situation. When the person is employed, it can be a time when workers feel the task is accomplished and forget that the person still has needs.

**III.A: DEFINING GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS** (10–20 minutes)

**TRAINER NOTE:** See *HANDOUT #11: PROGRAM GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS*.

**TRAINER STATES:** An employment program needs to fit with the overall design of the housing and services program. Most employment programs are evaluated on the number of people who achieve and retain gainful employment. Some programs also include non-gainful employment as part of their measurement of success. Because of this, the expectations of tenants and program participants, direct service staff, and program managers/administrators should be clear and reasonable and based on the belief that people can and will succeed at work. A lack of such expectations can lead to confusion, frustration and ultimately undermine the effectiveness of employment programming.

**TRAINER ELICITS:** GOALS ARE IMPORTANT. WHAT SHOULD THE GOALS ADDRESS? [Expected responses include:]

- Program goals should be achievable, realistic and appropriate for the populations served.
- Clear intake and assessment procedures should ensure a match between the tenant's needs, expectations and program services.
- Participant requirements need to be clear. (For example, does the person need to be compliant with treatment in order to participate in the program?)
- The role of staff people should be clear.
- Input and suggestions from participants should be implemented into the program.
- Experiences in the program should build skills, confidence, and a sense of progress toward career plans.
- Flexible outcomes where possible, should be part of the goals. People with special needs may vary greatly in their ability and desire to achieve full-time employment. There will be setbacks and successes.
- Programs should have clear and enforceable rules.
- Benchmarks and objectives should be able to be acknowledged.
- It is critical to identify sources for jobs that tenants will want and will be able to do.

**LEARNING POINTS:** Participants will have a wider understanding regarding the importance of setting program goals that are clear and define expectations.

**III.B: CREATING A CULTURE THAT PROMOTES WORK (20–30 minutes)**

**BRIEF LECTURE:** The creation of a culture that promotes work begins with an environment in which employment is encouraged and expected. This is accomplished by establishing values and promoting behavioral norms that underscore the importance of working.

**TRAINER NOTE: EXERCISE:** Trainer asks the trainees to break into small groups and come up with strategies that would help organizations establish a culture that promotes work. See ***HANDOUT #12: CREATING A CULTURE THAT PROMOTES WORK.***

[Expected responses include:]

- Integrate employment into all documentation
- Have peers speak to community regarding employment
- Prioritizing applications for funding of employment services
- Opening-up appropriate staff positions within the organization to tenants and developing transitional employment and training slots.
- Ensuring that staff position responsible for the overall employment program is filled by an individual who is seasoned and has relevant experience
- Ensuring that the employment program receives sufficient status in the organization's structure and hierarchy
- Arranging for distribution of an income mix among the supportive housing project's tenancy, including low-income working people who can be role models and motivators for others thinking about going to work
- Arranging staff schedules to accommodate tenants who work during the day
- Engaging tenants in an employment focus early in the process, such as inquiring about employment goals at the time of the initial intake interview to the residence
- Making resources such as computers, telephones, fax lines, desks, and transportation and clothing funds available to those who are seeking employment

- Making optimum use of physical space to enhance an emphasis on employment, such as providing a comfortable location for conducting employment and job searches and having a section of an in-house library devoted to career development and employment related materials
- Celebrating employment-related milestones such as graduations and promotions

**LEARNING POINT:** Trainees will appreciate the importance of creating a culture that helps people succeed at employment.

### **III.C: DEFINING STAFF ROLES (20–30 minutes)**

**TRAINER STATES:** There are a number of ways that supportive housing programs have set up employment programs.

- Some have developed separate employment departments or programs that are distinct from the activities of supportive service teams.
- Other providers have integrated employment staff positions into the supportive services program.
- Still others have added employment services to the services offered by case management staff.

**TRAINER ELICITS:** BASED ON WHAT WE HAVE DISCUSSED SO FAR, WHAT ARE THE VARIOUS TASKS STAFF NEEDS TO PROVIDE TO RUN AN EFFECTIVE EMPLOYMENT COMPONENT IN SUPPORTIVE HOUSING? [Expected responses include:]

- Skill building
- Job coaching
- Assessment
- Intake
- Providing support
- Finding jobs
- Running employment related groups
- Good referral system
- Creating a positive culture

**BRIEF LECTURE:** Employment programs can include a few or many different types of staff roles depending on the design and size of the initiative. The “who, how, and where” of providing vocational support services vary with different program designs. Residential service programs, for instance, sometimes subsume employment and vocational services under general case management functions. This is usually due to limitations related to the size and resources of the program. While combining case management and vocational support services may sometimes have the advantage of tailoring custom-made efforts to support each individual tenant’s career plan, it can have disadvantages as well. For example, developing and maintaining vocational support services that maximize job placement and career advancement can be difficult if left solely to the judgement of individual staff. Similarly, the design makes it more difficult to ensure programmatic efficiencies, expertise and quality assurance. Indeed,

much can be said in favor of residential employment programs that have a distinct vocational component or dedicated employment staff.

In any design, good communication coordination and integration between staff is very important.

**TRAINER NOTE:** EXERCISE: Trainer divides participants into several small groups. Each group is assigned one or more of the following job titles and is asked to describe the roles and tasks associated with that title. Issues of collaboration with other staff, potential pros and cons of having this position in the program, and any other thoughts related to this position should be addressed. Each group should assign a “recorder” who will report back to the large group. Following each position listed below are areas that will likely emerge in the groups. Although specific titles for staff positions will vary from program to program, the following listing provides a glossary of common titles and job responsibilities. See ***HANDOUT #13: STAFF ROLES AND TITLES.***

- **Case Managers/Service Coordinators:** The overall coordination of individual tenant services is usually the responsibility of the Case Manager/Service Coordinator. Typically, the role includes scheduling a tenant for medical and mental health appointments, obtaining benefits and medical insurance, making a referral to a substance abuse program, helping to reunite a tenant with family members, or help in accessing legal/advocacy services. Case Managers would, therefore, also refer individuals to an employment program. If applicable, the Case Manager must also be in close communication with the Vocational Counselor and work to help the tenant access supports to overcome obstacles to work.

Employment goals should be integrated into the service or treatment plan. Case Managers are frequently involved in the delivery of pre-vocational services. Service staff are also often most familiar with tenants' overall abilities and can help to identify life skills that will be transferable to the work place. Integration across programs usually includes interdisciplinary/departmental meetings on some regular basis, coordination of documentation procedures and mechanisms for staff in various departments to work together.

- **Vocational Counselors:** Also called Career Counselors or Employment Specialists, these staff persons are responsible for working with program participants to develop a step-by-step vocational plan. Ideally, Vocational Counselors limit their information gathering and interventions to areas that directly impact employment. The Vocational Counselor works with the Case Manager to integrate the vocational plan into the general service plan.

Vocational Counselors identify obstacles to maintaining employment and provide ongoing assistance in minimizing the negative impact of these obstacles to success. This may include recommendations that an individual receive substance abuse treatment, mental health services or the additional training or education that a person needs to get and keep a job.

- **Job Coaches:** Some programs use Job Coaches to provide on-the-job support to program participants. Coaches can assess how an individual is doing on the job in addition to providing immediate feedback, training, and assistance with the job. Job Coaches gain an understanding of the needs of the employer, and many businesses report that the Job Coaches give them confidence in hiring employment program participants. In most cases, the role of the Job Coach is most intense when a participant first transitions into a new job and decreases over time.
- **Job Supervisors:** When sponsoring in-house training or employment positions, a Job Supervisor or “boss” is usually assigned to oversee completion of tasks. Someone who understands the job and the responsibilities of the employee usually fills the Job Supervisor role. This position is preferably not involved in counseling the employee on personal matters. Conflicts of responsibilities can easily develop. For instance, if a Case Manager or Vocational Counselor attempts to supervise the tenant as an employee. The worker’s familiarity with the individual’s personal issues can make it difficult to remain objective about job performance and can be confusing to the participant.
- **Job Developers:** Employment programs frequently hire Job Developers to establish relationships with businesses in the community to help secure jobs for program participants. Job Developers also serve as liaisons between the program and the job site and address problems and issues that come up regarding specific placements. Some programs suggest that Job Developer positions be distinct from Vocational Counselors, due to potential role conflicts as well as the different skills required in the respective roles.

Brokering jobs that are appealing and offer a living wage with benefits is a sophisticated and labor-intensive responsibility. Having a Job Developer on staff who can focus on locating viable employment opportunities is clearly an advantage for building a job bank and for keeping a program moving along and grounded in reality. A Job Developer also serves to sustain connections with employers and to establish a track record of good referrals.

- **Employment Director:** Some organizations are fortunate enough to have a staff person dedicated to overseeing the agency-wide development of employment activities, including vocational services, job training, employment opportunities, business planning and development, and corporate relationships. The Director may be responsible for fundraising, preparation of business plans, regulatory compliance, staff/tenant hiring, development of community support structures and project evaluation.

**LEARNING POINTS:** Trainees will have a better understanding of the common roles and job titles for employment staff in Supportive Housing.

**III.D: MANAGING ENTITLEMENTS (20–30 minutes)**

See **HANDOUT #14: ENTITLEMENTS.**

**TRAINER ELICITS:** WHAT KINDS OF EXPERIENCES HAVE YOU HAD OR HEARD OF REGARDING ISSUES OF BENEFITS FOR TENANTS WHO HAVE BEGUN WORKING? [Usually what will emerge are difficult stories of people losing benefits including medical coverage.]

**TRAINER ELICITS:** WHAT ARE SOME WAYS THAT PROVIDERS CAN BE HELPFUL IN DEALING WITH THESE PROBLEMS? [Expected responses include:]

- Whenever possible, tenants should be referred to jobs that offer health insurance.
- Case managers can inform tenants about “Ticket to Work” and “Work Incentives Improvement Act” of 1999. This program assists Social Security beneficiaries obtain, regain and maintain gainful employment through use of a “ticket” system. For more information, contact your local Social Security Office or log onto [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).
- Case managers should offer support on this issue from the beginning of work with tenants.
- Advocacy should be provided.
- For in-house jobs, some organizations arrange to have jobs program participants covered by the agency’s employee health plan.
- Some states are developing “Medicaid Buy-In” programs in which people can purchase Medicaid benefits as their income increases above established eligibility levels.
- Hiring a sophisticated Entitlements Specialist who understands the impact of income on various public benefit programs and the processes for maintaining eligibility can be helpful.
- The employment program can provide on-going education about entitlement-related issues, including prior to the person having a job.
- Staff should help tenants calculate the effect of income on their benefits and monitor this in on-going meetings.
- Offer workshops on financial planning, tax preparation and retirement planning.

**LECTURE:** Benefits issues can also have programmatic implications beyond the technical reporting requirements that providers should plan for. Obviously, many people have relied on public benefits for a long time and potential changes in these arrangements can generate significant fear and anxiety, even causing reluctance to pursue employment at all. For some, despite repeated advisories and discussion about the changes in their benefits that will occur as they earn an income, the actual loss of these funds can be potentially disruptive and cause one to think about quitting.

**LEARNING POINTS:** Understanding income caps and the various reporting requirements regarding employment and benefits is essential for all employment programs. Participants will know more about the “ticket to work” program the federal government has implemented.

**III.E: THE ADA** (20–30 minutes)

**BRIEF LECTURE:** It is important that the career-planning process include discussions about self-disclosure of personal information to colleagues and supervisors. In some cases, the Americans with Disabilities Act will apply and people should be informed about the accommodations available and the best processes for obtaining these accommodations.

**TRAINER NOTE:** See ***HANDOUT #15: AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT(ADA)***.

*(Excerpted and revised from the Technical Assistance Manual on the Employment Provisions (Title I) of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., January 1992.)*

**AN EMPLOYER CANNOT DISCRIMINATE AGAINST QUALIFIED APPLICANTS AND EMPLOYEES ON THE BASIS OF DISABILITY.**

The ADA prohibits employment discrimination against “qualified individuals with disabilities.” A qualified individual with a disability is:

“An individual with a disability who meets the skill, experience, education, and other job-related requirements of a position held or desired, and who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of a job.”

**THE ADA DEFINITION OF INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY IS VERY SPECIFIC. A PERSON WITH A “DISABILITY” IS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO:**

- has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of his/her major life activities;
- has a record of such an impairment; or
- is regarded as having such an impairment

**THE ADA SPECIFICALLY STATES THAT CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS ARE NOT PROTECTED BY ITS PROVISIONS. SUCH PERSONS ARE:**

Persons who currently use drugs illegally are not individuals with disabilities protected under the Act when an employer takes action because of their continued use of drugs. This includes people who use prescription drugs illegally as well as those who use illegal drugs.

However, people who have been rehabilitated and do not currently use drugs illegally, or who are in the process of completing a rehabilitation program, may be protected by the ADA.

#### DEFINITION OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION:

Reasonable accommodation is a critical component of the ADA's assurance of nondiscrimination. Reasonable accommodation is any change in the work environment or in the way things are usually done that results in equal employment opportunity for an individual with a disability.

Some examples of reasonable accommodation include:

- making existing facilities used by employees readily accessible to, and usable by, an individual with a disability
- job restructuring
- modifying work schedules
- reassignment to a vacant position
- acquiring or modifying equipment or devices
- adjusting or modifying examinations, training materials or policies
- providing qualified readers or interpreters

**LEARNING POINT:** Participants will have a better understanding of the ADA and its impact on career planning.

### **III.F: CONFIDENTIALITY AND SHARING INFORMATION** (10–20 minutes)

**TRAINER NOTE:** See *HANDOUT #16: CONFIDENTIALITY AND SHARING INFORMATION*.

#### **BRIEF LECTURE:**

The purpose of maintaining tenant's confidentiality is to protect the tenants' right to privacy and establish a trusting relationship with staff

Within an organization, the level of disclosure among staff of clinical and diagnostic information about program participants will vary as a function of program philosophies, structure and staffing patterns. However, confidentiality issues regarding case records can become thorny and programs can prevent mishap and communication problems by having clear guidelines from the outset about information sharing.

In the average workplace, for instance, employers and trainee programs would not have access to an individual's health and mental health records. Indeed, there are numerous laws and professional standards and codes of ethics in place (e.g., for physicians and social workers) that are intended to prevent discrimination or inappropriate disclosure of confidential information.

In many situations, however, application of confidentiality guidelines requires extra thought and interpretation.

**TRAINER NOTE:** EXERCISE: On a flip chart the trainer should write the following questions and ask people to think about each question from the perspective of their own program. Participants will share their views with the group.

- When an individual is the recipient of services in a mental health organization that also has an employment program, is all the information about her shared between the "service" staff and "employment" staff?
- Who needs to know clinical and diagnostic information and why?
- Who should make the determination about information that is shared?

However these questions are answered, they should not be left to the judgment of individual staff to decide on a case-by-case basis and should be clarified in clear policies at the managerial level.

**TRAINER STATES:** One model for information sharing is that all “service” staff who have a “counseling” function (e.g., case managers, vocational counselors) could have access to clinical and diagnostic information, but “non-clinical” (such as job supervisors) would have only circumscribed access as defined by the organization’s policies. In some cases, organizations develop a fact sheet of information that is made available to appropriate non-clinical personnel.

When information is to be shared beyond the organization, program participants usually need to sign a waiver of confidentiality. In all cases, individuals should know what information about them is being shared and with whom.

**LEARNING POINTS:** Programs must consider what level of information will be shared between team members and what is considered confidential.

#### **IV.A: SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES — POLICY ISSUES** (10–20 minutes)

See ***HANDOUT #17: EMPLOYMENT ISSUES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.***

**LECTURE:** In developing employment services for their tenants, most supportive housing providers must address issues related to disabilities and special needs.

**TRAINER ELICITS:** WHAT ARE SOME OF THE EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVES AND POLICY ISSUES THAT AFFECT EMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS? [Expected responses include:]

- Broad access to jobs for people with disabilities remains limited. It is estimated that nationwide less than fifteen percent of individuals who receive SSI for serious mental illness participate in the workforce.
- Many people with disabilities want to work, but do not, due to stigmas and lack of encouragement.
- Some municipalities experience a lack of employment training for individuals with disabilities.
- Fear (and often reality) of losing benefits can cause ambivalence.
- A pervasive public attitude that disabilities and employment are incompatible
- Lack of needed workplace accommodations, no matter how minimal the need

**LECTURE:** Though much of this programming in supportive housing is relatively new and occurs in uncharted territory, the results have been very encouraging. To be educated about mental illness or AIDS, for instance, is to understand that many people with disabilities can be very productive employees given only reasonable accommodations for their illnesses.

**LEARNING POINT:** There are external perspectives and policy issues that affect employment for people with special needs.

**IV.B: SPECIAL NEEDS — PROGRAM ISSUES** (10–20 minutes)

**TRAINER STATES:** We have been addressing programmatic issues throughout this training. The issues are not terribly different for people with special needs but, for many, may be magnified.

**BRIEF LECTURE:**

If you are running an employment program where some participants have special needs, assessment is crucial. The specific issues regarding employment will vary based on the individual need/disability and its impact on individual functioning. An initial step in making a match to a job or employment area is an assessment of how a disability impacts the person's ability to work.

Additionally, like anybody else, there are wide variations in the abilities, aptitudes and skills of people who have disabilities. Some disabilities may so profoundly affect an individual's functioning that employment options are extremely limited or the level of support required to maintain a job is impractical. Others may experience no or minimal impact, thus expanding employment options.

Providers must ensure that they have adequate resources and staff to support their goals and outcome measures. Being able to offer flexible programming and access to a broad range of jobs, including transitional, supported, part-time and full-time work, are optimal. Helping people to address gaps in work history is also important.

**TRAINER ELICITS:** WHAT ISSUES DO WE NEED TO LOOK TO THE ADA TO ADDRESS? [Expected responses include:]

- Issues of self-disclosure and accommodation under the ADA

The ADA prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of various physical and mental disabilities and requires employers to make reasonable accommodations to enable qualified disabled people to fill available positions. Reasonable accommodations range from specialized communications and computer equipment to adjustments in work hours or assignments. If a participant requires accommodation in the workplace for a disability, that person will need to inform the employer and may do so during the interview process or after starting work. Program participants and staff should be educated about the ADA, how it can be applied and when it should be.

In cases where accommodation under the ADA is not being sought, the decision to disclose a non-visible condition or disability to an employer or colleagues is one that must be weighed carefully. It is ultimately the tenant's choice (except in cases where job sites have agreed to dedicate slots for specific populations), but staff should help the individual assess the positives and negatives of disclosure and, if needed, help plan how to discuss the issue. For many people, disclosure will occur once relationships with co-workers have developed and there has been some degree of success in the job.

**LEARNING POINTS:** Many issues are the same for people with special needs as for others in the job training program. For this population in particular, excellent assessment procedures need to be in place. The ADA protects people with disabilities, and organizations need to know these laws. Entitlements and health benefits are imperative to address

**IV.C1: SPECIFIC SPECIAL NEEDS: MENTAL ILLNESS** (10–20 minutes)

**TRAINER NOTE:** Trainer can tailor the focus of this section specifically to the population(s) served at the participant's sites. If trainees provide support to persons living with mental illness, the trainer may spend more time on this topic.

**TRAINER STATES:** There is a broad spectrum of mental illnesses, and a mental illness can impact functioning in a variety of ways: cognitively, emotionally, interpersonally and behaviorally. In vocational planning, it is important to understand if an individual has particular difficulties as a function of his illness.

**TRAINER ELICITS:** WHAT ARE SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES THAT MENTAL ILLNESS MAY CAUSE THAT WOULD EFFECT SOMEONE ON THE JOB? [Expected responses include:]

- Learning and retaining information
- Planning and prioritizing tasks
- Communicating with others
- Managing stimulation
- Making decisions
- Resolving conflicts
- Managing stress
- Issues related to loss (person may be competing for jobs that are nothing like the jobs they dreamed of or had before becoming ill)
- Earned income may put benefits at risk creating ambivalence for some persons
- Low self-esteem

**BRIEF LECTURE:** For some people with serious mental illness, full-time gainful employment may not be an option and the employment program will need to develop other work possibilities. It is often useful to use in-house and supported job opportunities to gain a thorough understanding of skills, abilities, and problem areas. People can act differently in a job environment than in a residential setting, and the therapeutic benefits of work can sometimes reduce symptoms and improve abilities.

What is true for all employment programs participants is emphasized even more for participants with mental illness: a one-size-fits-all approach to employment services does not work for everyone. Providers can be helpful to tenants by helping them to advance toward their individualized goals, understanding specifically how features of their illness affect job choices and performance,

helping to make the best choices each step of the way, offering transitional and supported work opportunities and preparing for setbacks. Additionally, the complicated rules around returning to work for SSI/SSDI recipients will usually require extra assistance to ensure income stability and the continuation of health insurance (which is particularly critical for psychiatric care and psychotropic medications).

**LEARNING POINT:** Trainees will have a better understanding of the impact living with mental illness may have on employment.

**IV.C2: SPECIAL NEEDS — HIV/AIDS** (10–20 minutes)

**TRAINER STATES:** People living with HIV/AIDS are vulnerable to the same issues experienced by other individuals with disabilities and special needs. Individuals with HIV/AIDS run the gamut from those who have had extensive work histories and successful careers to people with very limited or no work experience.

**TRAINER ELICITS:** WHAT ARE SOME OF THE ISSUES FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV OR AIDS AS IT RELATES TO EMPLOYMENT? [Expected responses include:]

- Changes in overall health status can impact employment.
- The need to manage complex medication regimens on the job and doctor's appointments often require that the appropriate line of work for an individual be re-assessed.
- Protease inhibitors and anti-viral drugs used to treat HIV can cause side effects, such as nausea, vomiting and severe exhaustion, making it difficult for some people to work regularly or at all.
- An increasing percentage of people with HIV/AIDS also have substance use problems and these issues can complicate the process of finding and keeping a job.
- Earned income may put health and other benefits at risk. This can be a major obstacle to entering or re-entering the workforce.

**TRAINER STATES:** Due to improvements in medications and treatment, people are able to live healthier lives with HIV disease and are often able to remain in their jobs or return to the workforce.

In vocational planning, it is important to obtain an accurate and detailed work history and an understanding of an individual's current health status and prescribed treatments. Given the diversity of this population, a range of work options including part-time jobs is important. Additionally, there is still much stigma and fear associated with HIV/AIDS and careful thought should be given to the issue of self-disclosure. However, many people with HIV/AIDS will be eligible for and require accommodation under the ADA. Similar to people with mental illness, continued health coverage is crucial.

**LEARNING POINT:** Trainees will have a better understanding of the impact that HIV disease may have on employment for persons living with the virus.

**VI.C3: SPECIAL NEEDS – ALCOHOL & SUBSTANCE USE** (10–20 minutes)

**BRIEF LECTURE:** This is one of the most common and perplexing barriers to employment for supportive housing tenants. It is also one of the most common employee problems in the general workforce. Repeated work problems due to substance abuse will usually result in termination in any type of work situation.

For some people, work is effective in helping reduce substance use and avoiding relapse while building confidence and self-esteem. Substance abusers often have intermittent work histories. Staff should be aware that for people in recovery, having money and stress or conflicts on the job can be triggers for relapse.

Employment staff should be aware of how an individual's substance use affects or is affected by employment and should help raise awareness of the consequences of substance use on a tenants' employment.

**TRAINER NOTE:** Trainer reads the following scenario: Joel wants to get a job so that he can get his own apartment. His worker tells him that at this point that is unrealistic. Even if he gets a job and his own apartment he will likely get evicted, as he has in the past, because of his substance abuse problems. She is stressing that he must deal with this problem before they move on to address his vocational needs. Joel feels that his substance abuse is not a big problem and that it is none of her business.

**TRAINER ELICITS:** WHAT MIGHT BE ANOTHER WAY TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE THAT IS DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THE WORKER IS DOING? WHAT ARE SOME ISSUES THIS SCENARIO RAISES? [Expected responses include:]

- In discussions with tenants, it is helpful to focus on the behaviors associated with substance use that are creating obstacles to employment and to plan how to minimize these problems. The substance use in and of itself is not relevant to working, but how it affects performance is.
- It is important to remember that the general workforce includes many people who are addicted to alcohol and/or substances. Many have learned to manage these addictions (although some better than others) and stay employed.
- The problem that an addiction causes with employment is what should be addressed by the program. Clearly, not all programs can accept this approach since it addresses only the symptoms and not the addiction.

**LEARNING POINT:** Trainees will have a better understanding of the impact that alcohol and substance use may have on employment.

#### **IV.C4: SPECIAL NEEDS — HOMELESSNESS**

**TRAINER NOTE:** Trainer makes it clear that homelessness is not a special need or a disability, but a life experience that may have a profound affect on a person.

**BRIEF LECTURE:** Homelessness is not a disability, but it is an experience that affects the lives of many people who enter supportive housing. Understanding how individuals came to be homeless and the effects of homelessness on their lives is important in the vocational planning process.

**TRAINER ELICITS:** WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HAVING BEEN HOMELESS AND CURRENT EMPLOYMENT ISSUES? [Expected responses include:]

- For many people, homelessness is directly linked to work and the economy. The loss of a job, the inability to maintain a job or a lack of available jobs that pay a living wage are often the reasons why people become homeless.
- Formerly homeless people can often have intermittent, problematic or limited work histories. Some may have limited education or a lack of competitive job skills.
- Many experience low self-esteem. Homelessness is a devastating experience that requires skills and endurance to manage and overcome. Expectations that formerly homeless people can get and keep jobs and belief in their ability to succeed is important.
- Homeless people may survive without any structure or have to adjust to a situation of extreme structure. Adapting to a new level of structure may take time.

Once again, in-house transitional employment positions can be helpful for gaining an understanding of an individual's strengths and weaknesses. For some people, temporary jobs and transitional employment or day labor may be a "low-pressure" way to re-enter the workforce. Additionally, addressing gaps in work history will usually be required during the interview process and it helps to rehearse this discussion in advance.

**LEARNING POINT:** Trainees will have a better understanding of the impact homelessness plays on employment issues.

**IV.D: SPECIAL NEEDS CASE STUDIES** (20–30 minutes)

**TRAINER NOTE: EXERCISE:** Trainer will divide trainees into small groups. Each group will work on one of the following cases addressing how employment-related issues might be addressed with these individuals. See **HANDOUT # 18: CASE STUDIES.**

1. Beth is a mentally ill elderly woman who feels lonely and isolated. She approaches her counselor asking about work opportunities. She says she wants a full time job to keep her busy and so she can meet new people. She says she was an art major but hasn't drawn in years. (*TRAINER KEY: Explore her goals further. Would an in-house job meet her needs? Would she be interested in running an on-site art group? Would she consider volunteer work or does she want to be paid? Would her needs be met in a Psycho-social Club.*)
2. Ted is HIV positive and is planning on changing his medication regimen. His doctor told him that he can expect to have some serious side effects for a few weeks. He asks his boss for a 6 week leave of absence and it is denied. Ted has never told his boss that he has HIV/AIDS disease. (*TRAINER KEY: Discuss risks and benefits of disclosure. Can't be protected by ADA unless employer is aware of disability.*)
3. At the age of 18, Meg was the envy of all her friends when she was invited to join the prestigious NYC Ballet Company. Meg never had another job after that as she suffered from a schizophrenic breakdown at the age of 19. Now, at age 23 she is stable, housed after a long stay in a shelter, and interested in working. Meg has entered the employment program and she was happy to be placed quickly in a part-time job sweeping the streets. After her first day at work the boss told her how happy he was with her work. Upon hearing this, Meg broke down sobbing. (*TRAINER KEY: Issues of loss and changes in how she sees herself need to be addressed. For many mentally ill people there is a grieving process about lost dreams.*)
4. Carlos is a tenant hired to work on the front desk in a supportive housing project on the 4 p.m.–12 midnight shift. Carlos usually begins drinking in mid-afternoon and continues into the evening. Naturally, when he is working, Carlos cannot drink or be under the influence. It is difficult for Carlos to avoid having a drink before he starts work and he finds himself getting anxious during his shift, wanting to have a drink and sometimes drinking on the job. (*TRAINER KEY: Maybe his shift could be changed to the times he doesn't drink. Maybe there could be a short overlap instead of having so much time where he cannot drink when he usually does. When is he going to AA? Is he in any programs? Can the job give him time to do this?*)

**V: CONCLUSION** (10–20 minutes)

**TRAINER NOTE:** Bring closure to the training by reviewing the highlights of the day. Ask for questions and comments about the content.

**TRAINER ELICITS:** WHAT ARE SOME OF THE COMPONENTS WE DISCUSSED THAT FALL INTO THE RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES IN SUPPORTIVE HOUSING? [Expected responses include:]

Providing basic concrete services (phone use, resume writing, transportation), career counseling, supportive employment, competitive employment and on-going job support

**TRAINER ELICITS:** WHAT ARE SOME OF THE COMPONENTS WE DISCUSSED IN DEVELOPING A PROGRAM AND DELIVERING SERVICES? [Expected responses include:]

Defining goals and expectations, creating a culture that promotes employment, having clearly defined staff roles, managing entitlements and understanding the ADA

**TRAINER STATES:** We also discussed a spectrum of special needs considerations that looked at mental illness, HIV disease, substance use and the experience of homelessness. No two individuals in supportive housing are identical, and part of the role of providing support in the area of employment is keeping the individual in mind. Tailoring services to meet the specific needs of tenants is ideal in promoting movement toward employment.

**LEARNING POINT:** Trainer will review significant points of the training and clarify any remaining questions.